

A
S E R M O N
O F
R E P E N T A N C E.

A very godly and profitable
Sermon, Preached at
LEE in ESSEX.

BY
ARTHUR DENT, Minister of Gods word:
*Published at the request of sundry godly, and
well-disposed persons.*

IONAH. 2.8.
*They that waite upon lying vanities, forsake their
owne mercies.*



LONDON:
Printed by Thomas Snodham for Roger Jackson,
and are to be sold at his Shop, neere the
Conduit in Fleet-street. 1621.



In Concionem *Arthuri Dent,*
G. Pudei Carmen.

Mature desipisce precor, peccataq; lingue,
Qui legis aut audis, qui quis es, istud opus:
Si nona peccatis peccata prioribus addes,
Olim hac te contra Concio testis erit.
Hac aliqui lecta flentes sua crimina multum,
Mutarunt mores, & nona vita placet.

The same in English.

THou that dost reade or heare this worke,
I wish thee to doe this:
Repent in time, and sinne forlake,
Amend what is amisse,
But if shou wilt adde sinne to sinne,
Not minding to amend:
This Sermon shall a witnesse be
Against thee in the end.
Some that haue heard this read of late,
Lamenting much their sinne,
Haue chang'd their former manners, and
A new life now beginne,



To the Reader.

Although I was most vnwilling that this poore Talent and trauell of mine, should euer haue beene broached abroad, and come to light, both because it may seeme as a Candle lighted at Noon-day, as also, because many other mens doings might more worthily a great deale haue beene published & committed vnto letters; yet because diuers which heard it preached with a liuely voice, were very instant, yea and more then importunate with me, to haue it published, vsing such reasons as I could not greatly gain-say, I did at the last yeelde to their request; and so this vntimely fruit is come abroad to be solde in open markets. Let no man therefore be offended, that I haue not strained my selfe to flie an high pitch; to foame out the froath of mans wisdom, and to make a

To the Reader.

great shew of learning, by blowing the bladder of Vanitie till it burst with swelling: but this is not my vse; I seeke especially the saluation of the simple and ignorant: and therefore stoope downe to their reach and capacitie. Therefore I beseech thee, gentle Reader, accept my good meaning: Reade this without prejudice, like it as thou profitest, so shalt thou haue praise of God, and comfort in thy Conscience.





A S E R M O N

of Repentance.

LUKE 13.5.

I tell you nay, but except you repent, you
shall all likewise perish.



The occasion of these words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, was, because there were certaine that shewd him the Galileans, whose blond Pilate had mingled with their owne Sacrifices, that is, murdered them as they were sacrificing, and so their blond was mingled with the blond of the beasts which were sacrificed. These men therefore thought that those Galileans were greater sinners then all other Galileans; because they had suffered such things: and that those eighteen also, vpon whom the Tower of Siloam fell & slew them, were sinners aboue all the men that dwelt in Ierusalem. Wherein they did utter a secret corruptio naturally engendred in al men: that is, very sharply to see into the sins of others, & severely to censure of them, but in the meane

while to flatter themselves, & to be blind-fold
in seeing their owne sinnes. For these men
thought, because the like iudgements did not
fall vpon them, therefore they were well e-
nough, they were not so great sinners, but ra-
ther highly in the fauour of God; according as
many do falsely suppose, that they are alwaies
the worst sort of people whom God doth most
strike and presse with his punishing hand: ha-
ving forgotten that God doth not keepe an o-
rdinarie rate here below, to punish euery man
as he is worst, or to fauour and coker him as
he is best, but only taketh some examples as
he thinketh good for the instruction and ad-
uancement of all others, and to be as it were loo-
king-glasses, wherein euery man may see his
owne face, yea, and his owne cause handled;
and that God is a seuerer revenger of sin: that
all men may learne by the example of some to
tremble and beware, lest peraduenture they
be worthily constrained to keepe their owne
turnes, and to know what they haue deserved.
These men, which brought these newes to our
Saviour Christ had taken forth this lesson:
whereupon our Saviour is iustly occasioned
to correct their erroneous, and sinister iudge-
ment, and to teach them that they must not re-
ioyce at the iust punishment of others, but ra-
ther be instructed thereby to repent,

And

And further, to signifie that God doth not alwaies most punish the most notozious offenders, as Murtherers, Thieves, Robbers, Whoremongers, Blasphemers, Quarrelers, Scoffers, and such like: but reserveth them vnto the iudgement of the great day, and as it were setteth them against the day of slaughter; and therefore he answereth them negatively, & saith; No, or not so, but except ye repent, ye shall likewise all perish: As if he should say: Are yee all of this opinion indeed, that only monstrous sinners are punished in this world, and others let alone: or that the Galileans, and those euill. vpon whom the Tower of Siloam fell, were greater sinners then all others: Or doe you thinke because the same iudgements haue not light vpon you, therefore you shall steale away in the darke, and escape the iudgements of God: No, no, you are deceiued: For I say vnto you, that except you mourne and lament for your sins, and fall to some agreement with God in time, you (I say, euen you, which are so ready to condemne others, and iustifie your selues) shall not only perish with the like iudgements in this present world, but be everlastingly condemned in the world to come. So that our Saviour in so saying, doth thunder downe a most dreadful sentence vpon all our heads: for he concludeth and setteth downe, that

that all men liuing vpon the face of the earth, whether they be high or low, rich or poore, young or old, noble or vn-noble, learned or vnlearned, simple or politicke, of what estate, degree, and condition soeuer they be, liuing and dying without repentance, shall perish and be damned in hell fire for euer. The Scriptures are full of such thunder-bolts. Ioh. 3. 18. He that beleeues not, is damned already. And 2 Cor. 13. 5 Proue your selues whether you are in the faith, examine your selues: know ye not your selues, that Iesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? Where the Apostle flatly setteth downe that all those which haue not Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith, which is the household sister of repentance, are no better then reprobates, cast-alwayes, and condemned persons. But because the most people in these daies are grossly deceiued in Repentance, both concerning what it is, what it meaneth, what it worketh, what be the qualities and conditions of it, which be the causes, and which be the lets and hindzances; and also why, when, & wherefore we should repent: therefore I haue a present intent to teach; first, what is repentance: secondly, which be her qualities and effects: thirdly, when we should repent: fourthly, wherefore we should repent: and last of all, what letteth vs from repentance. Which order

and

and methode of teaching, although some may mislike (as indeed with me it is not ordinary) yet considering the matter I have in hand, I thinke it not inconuenient. But to the matter.

Repentance is an inward sorrowing and continuall mourning in the heart and conscience for sin, ioynd with faith, and both inward and outward amendment. Inward (I say) in changing the thoughts and affections of the heart, and outward in changing the words and works from euill to good. This repentance, no doubt, was in David, who when he was covertly reproofed by the Prophet Nathan, and his sins layd before his eyes, did not stubboznlly defend them, and so luffe against God: nor yet secretly accuse them, and daube them over, but cryeth out in the bitternesse of heart, I have sinned, and thereupon made the 51. Psalm, a Psalm indeede full of dolour and heavinesse, wherein the Prophet bewaileth his faults, lamenteth his sins, and prayeth euen for a new heart, and a new spirit, new thoughts, new affections, new purposes of amendment of life: so that in David we may see an inward sorrowing, a lasting griefe (as the Booke of Psalmes both euery where declare, which layeth him out, as it were in an Anatomy) yea, and great reformation, both in inward, and outward sins: Where therefore behold what is Repentance.

Like

Likewise S. Peter through infirmity having
 denyed his Lord and Master Christ, and being
 pinched of his owne conscience and wakened
 with the alarme of a poore Cockes crowing,
 went out of the Court of Pilate, with an hea-
 nie heart weeping bitterly, and euer after
 stoutly professing Christ, even vnto the death.
 So then what is repentance. The Prophets
 in the Old Testament, exhorting the rebelli-
 ons Iewes vnto repentance, vse commonly
 an Hebrewe Verbe, which signifies, Turne yee,
 or, Retorne yee, and come backe againe: by
 the which Metaphor is meant, that like as a
 man that is strayed farre out of his way, must
 retorne quite backe againe the contrary way:
 So those that haue strayed from the way of
 godlinesse to the way of sinne, must come
 backe agayne as fast as euer they went for-
 ward, and altogether change the course of their
 life: so that repentance is an earnest turning
 vnto God, with all our heart, soule and minde.
 Saint Iohn Baptist, and the Apostles in the
 new Testament, exhorting vnto repentance,
 vse the Grecke word, which signifieth a chan-
 ging of the minde after ward, or after wit: so
 that those which through their folly, and want
 of former wit, haue slipped into the deepe pit
 and dangerous gulf of sinne, when they come
 vnto themselves, & haue recouered their wits,

will

will be wisse afterward, and take heed they neuer come there againe, according to the Pro-
uerbe: The burnt childe will take heed of the
fire. By this time, I hope you see what is Re-
pentance; it is not every sorrow, but sorrow
for sinne; not for some sinne, but for all sinde:
not for an houre, but for euer: not for a day,
but continually: not for a weeke, but as long
as we liue. Some thinke every sorrow is re-
pentance, but so should worldlings repent.
Some thinke every little paine for sinne is Re-
pentance, so should Pharaoh repent. Some
thinke all weeping and lamenting for sinne is
repentance, so should Esau, Iudas, and Cain re-
pent. Some thinke every little humbling of
our selues is repentance, but so should Ahab
repent. Some thinke that good workes, and
good purposes are repentance, but so should
every sicke man repent. Some thinke that re-
formation of wordes and deeds are repentance,
but so should clauall men repent. Some thinke
that to crie God mercie is repentance, and so
should every soule repent. You see therefore
how many are deceiued in repentance. But if
you will see what it is indeed, looke backe to that
which hath bene said before: for he that will
repent in good earnest, must not hang downe
his head like a bull-rush for a day onely, and so
hane done: nor cry from the teeth outward,
Lord

Lord haue mercy on me, and so alway: but he must make a backe-reckoning, with diligent consideration of his former life, as did the Prophet David, psalme 119. 50. I haue considered my wayes, and turned my feete vnto thy Testimonies. So must every one that meaneth to repent, sinke aside into some corner, or out-place, that there he may haue roome enough to beate his owne conscience, and to make his heart smart for his sinnes by aggravation thereof, and weighing all the circumstances, as in the ninth of Daniell: The Church of God confesseth her sins, not lightly, but with wonderfull great exaggeration, and heaping vp one thing to another. So that it is not enough to say, I haue sinned: but to say, I haue most traitterously sinned, I haue most obstinately, carelessly, and rebelliously sinned: I haue monstrously offended in such a place, in such a house, in such a company, on such a day, in such a corner, in the darke, I committed Adultery closely, when I thought none had seene me, in such a chamber I defild my neighbours wife, mine owne conscience doth accuse mee of it: in such and such company I haue bene drunke, I haue spoken and raised against Gods word, I haue mocked the Preachers, I haue spared no oathes nor filthy speech: and now (O Lord) Lord, what an ugly monster
and

and wretched villaine am I: Here I stand
before thy presence, all naked, blinde, wounded,
poore, wretched and miserable, hauing deserued
a thousand damnations, if thou shouldst enter
into iudgement, and trie the Law with mee.
Wherefore I beseech thee to shew pittie and
compassion vpon mee. Annoyn my wounds
with the oile of mercie, restore me my sight,
cloathe my nakednesse, enrich mee that am
poore, strengthen me that am weake, helpe mee
that am fallen: O bid me not fare well. The
Infant ouercommeth his mother with crying,
the childe his father with weeping, and the
seruant his master by intreaty, and wilt thou
not be intreated? Lord: Thus, I say, if eue-
ry man would speake in his conscience to God,
and thus narrowly, or more narrowly exa-
mine himselfe, vndoubtedly hee were in the
way to repentance.

But alas, it is a world to see how the blinde
buzzards, and crooked Canker-wormes of
this world goe awrie from this rule, decei-
uing themselves with the bare title and na-
ked name of Repentance. Many (indeed) can
talke of it, but few walke in it: many speake
of it, but few seele it: many describe it, but
few know it. It is hidde and locked vp from
the world, and revealed onely unto Gods
Children: many thinke they haue caught it,
when

when they haue but the shadow of it. It is so high that few can reach it: It is so deepe that few can come to the bottome of it: It is so narrow, that few can enter into it: It is so wide, that few can comprehend it: so slippery, that few can hold it: so secret, that few can finde it: therefore my deare brethren, I beseech you let vs pray vnto our God, that he would reueale vnto vs this mystery which is hid from the world, that we may see it, and know it, finde it, and seele it, to our endlesse comfort, through Christ Iesus, which grace he grant vs.

But now to the second point, concerning the Qualities and Fruits of Repentance: one especiall qualitie of Repentance is alwayes to bring with it remission of sinnes: for where true Repentance goeth before, there remission of sinnes must necessarily follow after: Not that repentance deserueth remission of sinnes, but because where God worketh repentance, there he pardoneth sinnes because of his promise, as in Ezekiel 18.27. When the wicked turneth away from his wickednesse that hee hath committed, and doth that which is lawfull and right, he shall saue his soule aliue. And againe. Esay 55.7. Let the wicked forsake his wayes, and the vnrightheous his owne imaginations, and turne vnto the Lord, and hee will haue mercie vpon him. So here we see to whom

whom forgiveness of sinnes, and the mercy of God belongeth : namely, to the penitent sinners, to those that leaue sin, and embrace godlines, to those that forsake their owne wayes and imaginations, and turne vnto the Lord. And as for such as walke in their owne wayes, & follow the delights of sin, without any sorrow or purpose to leaue them, they haue nothing to doe with the mercy of God: and though Iesus Christ had suffered a thousand deaths (which could not be) yet shal no impenitent sinner haue remission of his sin by his death, nor any other benefit of his passion : for they belong onely to his Church & chosen people here vpon earth. He therfore that is not of the Church, he that is not grafted into Christ by faith, he that is not a member of his mysticall body, can enioy nothing by Christs death: If any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch & withereth, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, & they burne. *Ioh. 15. 16.* We reade in the 29. of *Deut.* how God barreth all Stubborn sinners from his mercy, & doth most terribly shew out against them. He that heareth the words of this curse, & blesseth himselfe in his heart, saying, I shall haue peace, although I walke according to the stubbornnes of mine own hart, thus adding drunkennes to thirst: the Lord wil not be merciful vnto him, but the wrath of

the Lord, and his ieaiousie shall smoke against that man, and euery curse that is written in this booke shall ligh vpon him. So that God saith plainly, he hath no mercy for such as walke in vaine delights of sin, & in the stubbornesse of their owne harts, adding drunkennes to thirst: that is, topning one horrible sin to another: yet for all that it is a wonder to see how the blind worms of the worlde deceiue themselves. For they thinke, whatsoeuer they say, whatsoeuer they doe, be it good, be it euill, whether they repent or not repent, yet they shall be saued by Christs death: as though they would make it a bawd to their sins, and so work that villany against Christ; I hope to be saued by Christs death as well as the best of them all, say some. But where is thy repentance, thou miserable wretch: Dost thou think that Gods mercy is common to all: and Christs death a bawd for thy sins: No, no, when it cometh to the bp. Wot, thou shalt hop short. For it will proue far otherwise. For thou shalt finde Gods mercy turned into iustice, and Christs death into worme wood, because thou hatedst knowledge, and chusedst not the feare of the Lord. Thus you see, my deere brethren, that repentance must needs go before forgiveness of sin, and where it leadeth not the way, there the gates of Gods mercy are shut vp: and this is the first quality

of repentance. It hath also another condition, and that is, to alter and change men from that they were before, not in substance and proportion of the body, but in the qualities and conditions of the minde. For whosoever hath truly repented, you shall by and by see a most marvellous and wonderfull change in him; so that he will not do as he hath done, nor speake as he hath spoken, nor cōpany as he hath companied, nor play the good fellow (as they terme it) as he was wont to doe, nor run the same erreffe of riot as he was wont. And this is that amazeth the world, and causeth them to bristle & foame at the mouth like wild Bores, and to speake euill of them that turne vnto God: For the world loveth his owne, and cannot abide that God should plucke one feather from his wings; but repentance doth violently pull men out of the clauwes of Satan, and change them from the condition of the world: for it maketh of proude, humble: of hurtfull, harmlesse: of cruel, meeke: of wolues, lambs: of lions, sheepe: of adulterers, chaste liuers: of drunkards, sober men: of swearers, reuerent speakers: of haters, friends: of despisers, embracers: of scoffers, louers: of earthly, heavenly: of Diuels, Saints: all these worketh repentance. Paul trauelled toward Damascus a Wolfe, a Persecuter, a Bloud-sucker, a Ba-

ter, a despiser: but ere he came there, he was quite changed, and cleane of another minde: so mighty was he that met him in the way. **W**hen Jesus Christ sent downe the holy Ghost vpon his Disciples, according to his promise, there were some scoffers at Ierusalem, which mocked and said, They are full of new wine: But the same men cryed out by and by after; Men and brethren, what shall we doe to be saued?

Here was a most wonderfull and sodayne change. See then the force of repentance, when God striketh it into the heart of man, and driueth the nayle to the head (as they say) it effecteth that which all the wisdome and policy of man is not able to bring to passe; & when they haue prouled hither and thither, and laid their heads together, and sought all the corners of their wits, yet can they not tell which way to turne their hand, or where to begin to change the heart of a man, and so conuert him to God. Therefore repentance is stronger then all the whole world, and worketh that which all men with their naturall wits, fine heads, and deepe deuices cannot compasse: for the conuersion of a sinner is a work supernaturall. Here then we haue a glasse to behold our selues in, whether euer we haue repented, or no: For if we find not this change and alteration in vs, we haue not repented, and so consequently remaine vn-

der damnation. Therefore let euery man looke
vnto himselfe: for marke how much he is chan-
ged and altered from his former wicked waies,
so much hath he repented. And he that is the
same man he was thre, foure, eight, nay thirty
yeers ago, surely, surely, he hath not repented,
and therefore abideth in damnation. I mar-
uell then how these men, which neuer felt any
change or alteration wrought in them, nay,
whose conscience telleth them that they are
not changed, nor know what it meaneth, can
haue hope of saluation; vnlesse peradventure
they beleene not this doctrine, or thinke it to be
false. I will send ouer these men to such as
haue bene in the like case they now are, and
yet thought they might doe well enough for
all that, although both blinde in iudgement,
and corrupt in conuersation. I haue knowne
and do know men, which befoze their conuer-
sion and inward change, were counted as ho-
nest men as euer brake bread, and as substan-
tial men as any could be, and as true dealers,
vpriht liners, good house-keepers, as any of
their neighbours: yea, and they had the same
opinion of themselves too: & yet notwithstanding
when they haue felt repentance working
this change and alteration in them, through
the power of the Spirit, at the preaching of the
word: and when they haue had new hearts gi-

uen them to discerne better, and new eyes to see better; as men come out of a dampe, haue wondred and marvelled at the palpable and grosse darknesse they were in before, and haue burst forth into these words. that they would not be in the same case they were before, no not for all the worlds goods: for if they had dyed in that case, they were sure they should haue been damned. But I pray you, what case were they in before: were they not good honest men, and well accounted of, and honest liuers, and wel taken wherlocuer they came: sure they were so take in the world, but now they think far other wise of themselves, their eyes being opened, and their iudgements imagined: for now they see that they take not before: now they vnderstand that God condemneth many whom the world iustifieth. He thinketh this example should make such and weighty men feare and suspect themselves, and know their owne misery before God. For those men were as good as they before their conuersion, & yet afterward rebelled that they were plunged to the bottome of hell, & drowned in the depth of damnation. He that hath eares to heare, let him heare: & he that hath eyes to see, let him see: for if men wil stil looth themselves for all this, that they shall be saved, without feeling any change or work of repentance, it will cost the full deere

in the end. For Christs words wil proue true, that whosoever repenteth not, shall be damned, that is, whosoever doth not seele in himselfe what is repentance, and finde in himselfe the qualities thereof, shall be condemned: for where repentance is, there be the qualities of repentance; and where the qualities be absent, there is no true repentance. So that where Christ saith, Except ye repent, ye shall all perish: it is all one as if he had said, except you know the truth of repentance, except you can proue unto your consciences the forgiveness of your sins, except you seele a change and alteration in the bottome of your hearts for all your former lewd wayes and misdemeanors, you shall surely perish and be damned. But let vs a little further search out the qualities of repentance. The Apostle in the 7. chapter of the 2. epistle to the Corinthians setteth downe seaven notable qualities and effects of repentance.

The first of them he nameth Care: For behold (saith he) this thing, that you have beene godly sorry, what care it hath wrought in you: that is, an earnest study, as it were, a taking thought to please God: for where true repentance hath once wrought, there foloweth great care afterward: care (I say) to live in the obedience of God: care to keepe a good conscience, care to reforme our households, care to

instruct our wiues, childzen, & seruants in the
 knowledge of God, care to pray with them
 morning and euening: and generally, care to
 perform all duties belonging to God: So that
 repentance is not a carelesse, but a carefull
 thing. Let no man thinke therefore, that al-
 though they welter in carelesnesse of the selfe,
 & liue in security all the daies of their life, yet
 their repentance is good enough: yea, and though
 they spend whole daies, nights, monthes, and
 yeeres in vanities, playes & pastimes, in tole-
 nes, fond delights, pleasures & voluptuousnes,
 in negligence of all duty, forgetfulness of God, &
 contempt of al good things: yet for al this they
 repent for their sins, & hope to be saved as well
 as any other. But alas, how can these things
 stand together, to repent for sin, & to delight
 in sin, to hate sin, & to loue sin, to fly from sin,
 and to follow after sin: But these men I per-
 ceine would faine make S. Paul a lyar: for he
 saith, A man hath neuer repented except he be
 careful after ward to please God, they say they
 doe repent, and haue repented, although they
 liue neuer so wretchedly, and carelesly. But
 when al licentious & lewd liuers, filthy whores
 mongers, beastly belly-gods and carelesse cat-
 tifes come to the kingdome of God and are sa-
 ued, then shal these men come also with them,
 to be saved by carelesse repentance.

The next quality and effect of repentance is named Clearing of our selues: that is, discharging of our selues when sin doth accuse vs & lay things to our charge: for when sin & Satan do terrifie the conscience of the poore penitent sinner by and by he flyeth vnto God, and asketh forgiveness through Iesus Christ, so cleareth himselfe, and maketh his apologie against sin and Satan: like as a man that is presented into the Court vpon suspicion of whoredome, or any other notorious crime, must cleare himselfe by witnes, of that which is laid to his charge: so the conscience that is cited by Satan before the iustice and iudgement-seat of God, cleareth it selfe by repentance, and asketh forgiveness through Iesus Christ. So that here we may see a wonderful fruit of a penitent conscience: it cannot abide the accusation of sin, it cannot be quiet til it be reconciled vnto God, and so haue peace with it selfe. For this is to be noted in the godly man, that when he hath committed any sin, and his conscience telleth him of it, by and by he feels lead within him, and is all heauy and cannot sleep quietly til he haue gotten into some corner, where he may moune & lament to the full, & confesse and lay open himselfe vnto God, and so cleare himselfe through Iesus Christ, his conscience bearing him witnes that his sin is forgone. Where

as contrariewise, the vngodly man, when his conscience accuseth him of sin, he dispatcheth away all such thoughts and treadeth them under foot: and by e by calleth for a paire of Cards or Tables, or some merry companion to dylate away time, and to put out all such thoughts out of his head: & so indeed he increaseth them more and more, and causeth them to rankle inwardly.

The third qualitie is called Indignation: that is, a mortall & deadly hatred against sin, as when a man both shudder and shake, and as it were grind his teeth at the remembrance of his sins: for this is alwaies in the penitent person, to loathe and abhorre all sinne from his heart, both his owne sinnes, and the sinnes of others, and to hate it as the Devil himselfe, which is the author of it, and to flee from it as from the very cut throat and hang-men of his soule, and to know it to be the only thing that blindeth and hardeneth, that separateth from God, and procureth all plagues and diseases, both of body and soule against vs. Therefore he spitteth at it in defiance, and disdaineth it, and stoppeth his nose at the stinke of it, wheresoeuer he smelleth it.

The fourth thing is Feare, which is a certaine awe of God, when a man is afraid to displease him: for the penitent person feareth alwayes,

wayes, and being pray to his owne infirmity
 and weakness, when God neuer so little with-
 draweth his grace & leaueth him alone) wor-
 keth his saluation with feare and trembling.
 He will not preiure vpon former grace to
 comfort any sin, or flatter himselfe in the mer-
 cy of God, and the things that he hath already
 tasted of God, to payd to some little sin, thin-
 king he may do that & be the child of God well
 enough, because some of Gods children haue
 fallen into greater: but rather he trembleth
 at the least motion of sin, and is afraid of the
 temptation which satan trappeth in the way,
 and is afraid when the temptations of sin are
 vpon him, to satysfie the hunger of sin: but ra-
 ther he fighteth against sin whē sin fighteth a-
 gainst him, & presenteth the fear of God before
 his eyes (as godly *Ioseph* in the assault of *Pors-
 phers* wife) to be as it were a tower of defence,
 & wellspring of life to avoid the snarcs of death.

The fift thing is Desire, that is, hungering
 and thirsting after righteousness. For the pe-
 nitent man is rashed with a desire of good
 things: he desireth to be every day better then
 other, he desireth to leaue euery day some sin,
 he desireth to pray, he desireth new knowlege
 and new vnderstanding of heavenly things.
 He desireth to heare Sermons, and will strain
 himselfe to heare them. He desireth the com-
 pany

pany of the godly, thinking himselfe in heauen when he is amongst them. He desireth the saluation of his very enemies, and prayeth for them. All these, and many other such like desires are in the penitent man.

The first quality is Zeale, which consisteth in the earnest embracing of vertue, and hatred of vice: so that the penitent person is zealous of euery good thing, zealous of Gods glory in all places, in all companies, and amongst all persons. He cannot abide that Gods honor should be impeached, or his name blasphemed, or his glory trampled vnder foot by wicked men: but will open his mouth to reprove the wicked, & stand stoutly in the defence of Gods glory. He is not like the Atheists and dissemblers, which are alwayes as the company, that is, godly amongst the godly, a Protestant amongst Protestants, wicked among the wicked, a Papist amongst Papists, a worldling amongst worldlings, and a swearer amongst swearers, a weather-cocke that turneth with euery wind. The penitent man, I say, is not of that stampe: but he is constant and zealous in al good things: he is zealous both against the pleasures and profits of sinne: though he might winne a whole world, or pleasure himselfe neuer so much by committing sinne against God, yet he will refuse it: for he hath learned from Christs mouth that

that it shall not profit a man to win the whole world, and to lose his owne soule.

The last thing is Reuenge: that is, the penitent person is so offended with the sin he hath committed, that he will be reuenged of himselfe for it. As for example, if he haue offended in gluttony, he will reuenge himselfe by fasting two or three daies after. If he haue offended in whoredome, he will be reuenged of his lusts by haltering and brideling of them euer after: If he haue offended in couetous catching and polling of other mens goods, he will be reuenged on himselfe by restitution, as was godly & penitent Zacheus; & this indeed is a speciall fruit of repentance, to reforme our selues in those things wherein we haue most offended. Now then we see (my deare brethren) what lieth in the belly of Repentance, and which be her inwards; so that we must needs now come to the belacing and unbowelling of Christs words: Except ye repent (saith he) ye shal all perish: that is, except ye haue this forenamed care, you shal all be damned: except ye haue this Clearing of your selues, you shal be damned: Except you haue this Indignation, you shal be damned: Except you haue this Feare, you shal be damned: Except you haue this Desire, you shal all be damned: Except you haue this Zeale, you shal all be damned: Except you haue this

Reuenge

Reuenge, you shal all be damned. For our Sa-
 uioꝛ Chꝛist doth not speak of the bare name of
 Repentance, but of Repentance with her fur-
 niture and appurtenances; so that whosoener
 hath not Repentance with all her qualities
 & effects, oꝛ at least some measure of them, hee
 hath no Repentance indeed, and therefore shal
 be damned: For except ye repent, ye shal all
 perisb. But me thinketh that I heare some
 man say: here is nothing but damnation, dam-
 nation, you preach nothing but the Law, let
 vs heare of the Gospell. My brethzen, I pro-
 test vnto you, that I speake in loue whatsoe-
 uer I speake, I desire the saluation of you all.
 If I could win but two of all this congrega-
 tion, I would count my selfe happy, and think
 that God had greatly blessed my labors. And
 vndoubtedly, if I knew any nearer way to
 bring you to God then by preaching the Law
 to make you know your selues, surely, surely,
 I would vse it: oꝛ if I could be perswaded that
 the preaching of the Gospell, & mercy, would do
 you moze good, you shoeld heare of nothing
 but Gospell, Gospell, Mercy, Mercy. But alas,
 I see that euerie carelesse and ignorant man
 presumeth vpon Gods mercy, I see that euery
 filthy liuer, and notozious blasphemers, abu-
 seth Gods mercy, in applying it to himselfe
 without repentance, so that they would make

Gods

Gods mercy a cloake for their sins; I see that
euery man would faine be flattered in sin, and
heare of it no more, but haue the Gospell prea-
ched: which indeed belongeth not vnto them,
continuing in their Stubbornesse, but onely
to the penitent sinner which forsaketh him-
selfe, and groaneth and panteth vnder the bur-
den of his sin. Therefore when I see you humi-
bled with the conscience of your sinnes, and
groane and pant vnder the burden of them:
when I see your faces blubbered with wee-
ping, and your hearts mollified, and sorrow-
ing with care, then will I comfort you, and
teale to preach the Law. But I pray you, will
you steale, murder, and commit adultery, and
yet heare of mercy? Will you mocke, sweare,
blaspheme and rail, and yet heare of mercy?
Will you serue sin, hate vertue, & follow your
owne lusts, and yet heare of mercy? Would
you haue plaisters before you haue wounds?
Would you haue physicke before you be sicke?
Would you be let blood before you haue need?
Would you not account him a foolish Phy-
sition that will minister physicke to a whole
man? Would you not thinke him an vnskilfull
Chirurgion, that will apply a gentle salve to
an old festered soze, and not rather cozzie it?
then know you my brethren, that because you
are full of grosse humors, you must haue strong
purgations,

purgation, because you are full of old festered wounds, you must haue corrosiue salues; for that is best for you, and the speediest way to recouer your health: and forasmuch as you be rough horses, you must haue a rough rider, and hard knotty timber must haue hard wedges, and hard strokes with a beetle. We preach the law to driue you to Christ, we preach iudgement to make you to seeke mercy, we preach damnation to bring you to saluation. But to preach mercy & forgiveness, before men see their sins, or know their misery by the preaching of the law, is to preach the Gospel vnprofitably: For he that is ignorant of the law, knoweth not what misery is in himself, nor what mercy is in God.

What father is there, who if his child should play the stubborne boy, and disobey him in euery thing he commandeth, would stroke his head, & say he were a good boy: and not rather severely correct him, & whip him with a Rod: What Master will commend his seruant for doing what he list, and not what he commandeth him: euen so we may not disobey and doe euil, and looke to be flattered too, and not rather chidden. Let vs know then, that though God vse searing, lancing, or corring & searching of the bones, and other violent remedies: yet in the meane while hee procureth our health by them. And let vs further vnderstand, that for
asmuch

as much as there is none other means to vnto vs to saluation, but by the cleansing of all our vices, and the same cleansing cannot be done but by violence, when we be warned by the doctrine of the Law, so as our owne consciences accuse vs, although we like well to be whole and then flattered and soothed, yet let vs take to be spoken vnto earnestly, to haue our faults told vs, and be made ashamed of them, and to haue our dishonesty discovered, and not desire to be pleased: For it were next way to make vs rotte in our owne filthinesse, if we should hold it in secret, and it should cost to deate the setting on, if we should be so flattered by men, and in the meane season the heavenly Iudges thunder downe vpon vs.

Therefore, when any man commeth to a Sermon, let him first and foremost make his reckoning to be rebuked, as meet it is, and let him vnderstand that it is for his profit that he is not soothed. And if he haue itching eares, let him lay them away from him, assuring himselfe else that he is fore-closed, so shall he neuer receiue the doctrine to his profit and instruction: and let him be content to haue his sores rubbed and belayed, that he may be brought to that which is for his welfare. If any man please a little body, what shall become of him? Shall hee giue him paine every minute of an houre?

heere: Shall giue him wine, whereas he
 should giue him water? Shall he giue him sal-
 lets: it were the next way to poyson him. To
 be short, it is certaine that a man doth alwaies
 seeke his own death, when he would haue men
 to seeth him. But now, which is better: either
 that he which hath the ordering of a sicke man,
 should yeeld to all his desires, or that he should
 bydle him, notwithstanding that he chafe and
 gnash his teeth, because he may not haue his
 will in his desires? You see therefore how dan-
 gerous a thing it is to flatter and raple by men
 with the preaching of Mercy, before they haue
 bene cast downe with the scule of Gods iudge-
 ment. Cease therefore to open your mouth, to
 make hue and crie ouer the Countrey, saying:
 They preach nothing but the Law, the Law,
 Damnation, Damnation; vnlesse you will
 take in Christ too, and make him one of the
 number, and accuse him of want of wisedome,
 because he preacheth and cryeth out, that who-
 soeuer repenteth not, shall be condemned. For
 my part, I preach the Gospell to whom the
 Gospell belongeth, and the Law to whom the
 Law belongeth, a iudgement to whom iudge-
 ment appertaineth. And therefore hold your
 peace, and be content to be ruled by the wis-
 dome of God. But now let vs proceed to the
 third general point, which is the time when we
 shall

shall repent. The holy Ghost in the scriptures pointeth vs to the present time, and exhorteth vs to make that the time of our repentance: Joel 2. 12. Therefore also now the Lord saith: Turne you vnto me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. Likewise, in the 3. chapter to the Hebrews: Exhort one another, while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardned, through the deceitfulness of sin. And in the same chapter: To day if ye will heare his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the prouocation. So that now, euen now, euen now is the repentance.

Now whilst he calleth, now whilst he speaketh, now whilst he knocketh; let vs now therefore heare, let vs now therefore obey, let vs now therefore redeeme this day, this present Wednesday, which hath afore-flowed so many dayes, which haue so long hardned our hearts, which haue let so many good things runne out and spill besides: let vs take vp this day, and make it the day of our repentance. Although we could neuer be moued with any Sermon hitherto, yet let vs now be moued once at last. Let vs now say, this shall be my day of repentance. I will deferre it no longer, but now will I turne, vnto my God, & forsake all my former wicked waies, and mine owne imaginations: I will now change the course of my life, & begin a

new againe. I will be acquainted with Gods
 word, and take counsel there how to do, how to
 behaue my selfe in every action. I will not only
 refozme my selfe, but also my whole household,
 wife, childzen and seruants, according vnto the
 same. Thus my deare brethren, I beseech you,
 purpose in your hearts without any further de-
 lay: and be not like to Epicures & slack-graces,
 which say, Youth will be youthfull, and youth
 will haue a course, and what should we make
 it so holy when we are yong: tush, there needs
 but a sigh an houre befoze death, let vs be mer-
 ty now, we shall neuer be yonger, wee will
 repent when we are old. As if (poore soules)
 they had Repentance in their fleues, and at
 their commandement, and that they could re-
 pent when they list. No, no, these fellows shall
 pay for their presumption: for God will giue
 them ouer to hardnesse of heart and impeniten-
 ce, because they toke so much vpon them, and
 made so long delays, that in the meane season
 they might enioy the profits and pleasures of
 sinne. Therfore (good brethren) let vs not put
 it off from day to day, but let vs now seek the
 Lord whilest hee may be found, and call vpon
 him whilest he is nere: let vs take time while
 time is, for time and tide waiteth for no man:
 Let vs know this to be the time of our visita-
 tion. Our Saviour Christ wept ouer Ierusalem,
 because

because they knew not the time of their visitation. He reproveth the Jewes because they could discern the face of the Skie, but could not discern the signes of the times. And surely in the end it will turne to our destruction, if we will not know this to be the day of mercy, the time of grace, wherein God stretcheth forth his hand unto vs, and wisdom crieth out in the streets. Therefore now while we have the light, let vs walke as children of the light: the night cometh when no man can worke. It shall be too late to call for mercy after this life, when the gates of mercy are shut vp, and repentance will be too late. Oh deere Christians, let vs remember the fine foolish virgins, which because they over-slewed the time, had heaven gates barred vp against them. Let vs also remember the fearefull and dolefull example of the rich Glutton, which being in hell torments, yelled and yelped for the least ease and helpe that might be, and could not have it. An hundred thousand times therefore better it is for vs, to leane our sins now, to mourne for them now, & now to repent, then hereafter (alas) when it shall be too late: better now a great deale to take some paines, to straine our selues to leane our sinnes, and to make our hearts smart for them, then to be condemned for euer, and to erre in the bottome of hell: **W**e haue wearied our
E 3
selues

felmes in the way of wickednes and destruction
 and we haue gone through dangerous wates,
 but we haue not knowne the way of the Lord.
 What hath pride profited vs? or what profit
 hath the pomp of riches brought vs? All these
 things are past & alway like a shadow, and as a
 host that passed by. We haue set our selues a-
 gainst the childe of God, we haue had them
 in derision, and in a parable of reproach: we
 foolles thought their life madnes, and their end
 with dishonour: but lo, they are counted amongst
 the childe of God, & their portion is amongst
 the Saints: Therefore let vs know the time of
 our calling, and let vs not be worse then the
 folwies of the ayre: the Turtle, the Crane, and
 the Swallow, obserue the time of their com-
 ming: the husbandman taketh his time, the
 Mariner watcheth his tides: therefore let vs
 also take the time, & turne to the Lord, whilst
 it is sayd to day: which grace God grant vs.
 Now let vs returne to the fourth point, con-
 cerning the causes which may moue vs vnto
 repentance. Wherein I haue obserued nine spe-
 ciall things.

First, the great mercy of God leadeth vs vn-
 to repentance, as Rom. 2. The bountifullnesse
 of God leadeth vs vnto repentance, saith the
 Apostle: God doth continually follow vs with
 his mercies and benefits, both concerning our
 soules

Soules & bodies, we haue no good thing which we haue not receiued at his hands, we hold all that we haue, of him; & to him we are beholding for all: great is his mercy towards our bodies, and every mercy & benefit either towards soule or bodie, calleth vs to repentance; he giueth vs meate, drinke, and clothing, these call vs to repentance: he keepeth vs at his owne cost and charges here below, this calleth vs to repentance: the Sonne, the Moone, & the Stars call vs vnto repentance; the birds of the ayre, the fishes of the sea, and the fruits of the earth, cry out vpon vs both to day and to night; Repent, repent: All creatures moue vs vnto repentance: Our creation calleth vs, our Redemption cryeth, our Sanctification knocketh, and our Election moueth vs to repentance: What could God doe more for his Vine-yard that he hath not done? Therefore let vs repent.

Secondly, the iudgements of God moue vs vnto Repentance; for all the thunder-bolts, plagues, and punishments, which God hath thowne downe vpon obstinate sinners, from the beginning of the world; are so many warning peeces vnto vs, to awake vs out of the dead sleep of sin, and to pricke vs to repentance. As in 1 Cor. 10. when the Apostle had cited diuers great iudgements of God against the olde Israelites for diuers sins, he concludeth:

Now all these things came vnto them for examples, and were written to admonish vs, vpon whom the ends of the world are come. So that all the iudgments we reade of in the scriptures, are as so many admonitions, and as it were Cart-ropes to draw vs to repentance. All the iudgements we reade of, doe see, and heare of euery day, knock with maine strokes, beate downe right vpon our consciences to repentance. The ugly monsters, strange birds, and fiery constellations, vnknowne comets, so badde weathers, marvellous droughts, vnwonted snowes, horrible inundations, strange wonders, strange apparitions, threatening of heauen aboue with flaming and shooting fire, trembling of the earth vnder our feet, and our houses ouer our heads, as of late dayes: What are all these, but as it were great Cranes, with beames and Cable-ropes, to draw vs to the Lord by repentance:

Whiedy, the word of God helpeth vs to repentance: for as God in the old tyme sent his Prophets both early and late, to call the rebellious Jewes to repentance: so he sendeth abroad the Preachers and Messengers in these dayes to sound vp the Trumpet of his Word, and to ring the sweet Beils of Aaron amongst them, to awake them to repentance: but alas, how lightly are they regarded: Who heareth their

their boyce? But surely this is the last reme-
dy that God hath appointed, and if this will not
moue vs to repentance, if this will not cure vs,
then are we altogether incurable.

Fourthly, the infinite number of sinnes we
haue committed, ought to be so many spurs
in our sides to prick vs to repentance. It is suf-
ficient (saith S. Peter) that wee haue spent the
time of our life after the lusts of the Gentiles,
walking in wantonnesse of lusts, drunkennesse,
gluttony, drinkings, and all abhominable ido-
tries. Therefore it is time now to repent.
Oh that men would looke backe to themselves,
as they were forty, thirty, twenty, or tenne
yeares agoe! Oh that they would call to mind
their open and secret sinne, and we thinketh it
should make their hearts blinde within their
bellies, to thinke vpon them! Oh that they
would consider how much time they haue mis-
spent, and how many good things they haue
neglected, and altogether omitted.

Fifthly, the shortnesse of our life calleth ear-
nestly vpon vs to repent. The time of our life
is sixty yeares and ten, and if they liue to eigh-
ty yeares, yet is their strength but labour and
sorrow, and so it is cut off quickly, and was thus
away, saith the Prophet David, we haue spent
our yeares as a thought, therefore he adueth:
Teach vs to number our dayes, that wee may
apply

apply our hearts to wisdom. Our life, for the shortness and inconstancy of it, in the Scriptures, is compared to grass, to a vapour, to smoke, to a weavers shuttle, which glideth away swiftly. Even so the dayes of men passe away, no man knoweth how. Man is of short continuance (saith Iob) and full of trouble. Experience teacheth vs, that to day a man, to morrow muste. Hence alway we must all, here is no biding place for vs: howe soon we know not. Therefore let vs repent.

Secondly, the small number of those which shall be saved; ought to thrust vs forward to repentance. Strive to enter in at the narrow Gate: for many, I say vnto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Luke 13. 24. And in another place he saith: The gate is streight, and the way narrow that leadeth vnto life, and few there be that finde it. If men would consider of this, it would make them look better about them, and try with themselves whether they be of that small number, or no.

Thirdly, death threatens vs, which is very terrible to the flesh, and the remembrance of it very bitter to a man that is abused and toiled in the pleasures of this world. It flattereth no man, it requiteth no person, it weigheth no friendship, it careth not for rewards, it is vngovernable, vgly, and cruell, and killeth dolefully right,
where

where it hitteth. Therefore let vs repent.

Eightly, the day of iudgement, and second appearing of the Son of man, he will come as a theefe in the night, in the which the heavens shall passe away with a noise, and the Elements shall melt with heat, and the earth with the works that are therein shall be burnt vp. Knowing therefore that all these things must be fulfilled, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conversation, and godlinesse: saith S. Peter. 2. 3. The Lord Jesus shall thew himselfe from heauen with his mighty Angels in flaming fire, rendering vengeance vnto them that know not God, and obey not vnto the Gospell of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Apostles, 2 Thiel. 1. I saw (saith Iohn, Ren. 20.) a great white throne, and one that sat on it, from whose face fled away both the earth and the heauen, & their place was no more found. And I saw the dead, both great & small, stand before God, & the books were opened, and another booke was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were iudged of those things which were written in the bookes, according to their workes; and the sea gaue vp her dead which were in her, and death and hell deliuerd vp their dead which were in them, & they were iudged every man according to his workes. In these places to be se both the solemnitie, the

the fearfulness and glory of Christs coming.

For he shall not come poorly & contemptuously, as in the first visitation, but he shall come very powerfully, royally, and triumphantly, to the great terror of his enemies, when a consuming fire shall go before him, and ten thousand thousands of Angels waite upon him, at what time the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chiefe Captains, and the mighty men, & every bond-man, and every free-man, shall hide themselves in dens, and amongst the rocks of mountains, and say to the rocks and mountaines, fall on vs, and hide vs from the presence of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come, and who can stand? Rev. 6. Therefore let vs repent.

The last thing is Hell torments, then the which nothing is more intollerable. Therefore sayth Christ, Math. 9. If thine hand cause thee to offend, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, then having two hands to goe into hell, into the fire that neuer shall be quenched, where the worme dieth not, and the fire neuer goeth out. The Scriptures speaketh terribly to our senses concerning the estate of the damned persons, calling it Hell fire, damnation, the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever. In the 30. chapter of
the

the Prophecy of Iſay, it is called Tophet, and is even prepared of old, it is even prepared for the King, but hath made it deepe and large, the burning thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord, like a river of brimſtone, doth kindle it. Theſe ſpeeches are terrible in themſelves, and very marvellouſly amaze vs. But if I had the tongues of an hundred men; nay, of an hundred Angels, yet were I not able to better them, as ſome (one ſay) ſhall ſeeke them, much leſſe were you able to concerne them. All the tortures and cruell tormentes that can be deuised by the wit of man, were executed vpon ſome one, yet were it nothing to this. The poore witcher thinks there is no paine to a cholicke, or a cruell ague: But if all cholickes, agues, and all other ſtrange diſeaſes, could poſſibly light vpon one man, it were but a flea-biting to that which is to come. The paine is endleſſe, ſafeleſſe and remedyleſſe. The dayes of their helliſh tormentes ſhall neuer wear out, nor their pennes come to an end, the longer they continue, the leſſe hope they haue: when as many perſons be expired as there be men in the world, and ſtarrs in the heauens: when as many thouſand yeres are ended, as there be ſtones and ſands by the Sea ſhoze, yet ſtill there be ten hundred thouſand times ſo many more to come. Whoſe that will
not

not note be named in hearing, shall then be
crushed in pieces in falling. All drunkards,
swearers, whoze-mongers, blurers, extortion-
ers, lyers, mockers, contemners, secure per-
sons, silly fellows, roasting custians, lusty
bloots, the brave lads of this world, and all o-
ther unbelevers, shall one day be apprehended
and arraigned before the bar of Gods tribinall
seate, wher e the maiestie of God shall stand a-
bove them with a naked sword of vengeance,
and a scepter of Justice, the diuell, that old
sathan, shall stand on the one side to accuse
them, and their owne consciences on the other
side to condemne them; e the gasping gulfe of
hell underneath them, ready to swallowe them
up for evermore. When shall the dreadfull sen-
tence of eternall lye and damnation procede
against them, Goe ye cursed into hell fire, &c.
Where they shall abide (as due recompence of
their iniquity) the bitter cup of Gods eternall
wrath e indignation in the kingdome of darke-
nesse, and in the fearefull presence of sathan,
e all the cursed enemies of Gods grace: where
the dolefull howling of Gods anger shall ever
sound through their eares, where shall ever be
weeping and gnashing of teeth: where shall be
confusion, lye, and endless lamentation:
their gripes shall be so great, that growne to
depe and theyr gaspeth is intollerable, that
they

they shall grin like a dog in their infernall con-
 ditions, and with howling and yelling cry out:
 Woe and woe that ever I was borne: O that I
 had never bene borne: or that my mother had
 borne me a tag: for then my condition should
 have bene better than it is; cursed was the
 time I was begot in, the houre I was concei-
 ued in, and the day I sucked my mothers pape:
 cursed I was alwaies, cursed I am, and cursed
 I shall be enermore. Woe, woe, how great is my
 torment: Whose heart doth not melt: Whose
 eares do not glow: Whose haire do not stand
 up on his head to heare these things: There-
 fore (deare brethren) let vs repent. If the mercy
 of God cannot allure vs, let his iudgements
 scare vs: If his iudgements cannot scare vs,
 let his word moue vs: If his word cannot
 moue vs, let our sins amaze vs: If our sins can
 not amaze vs, let the shortnes of our life damp
 vs: If the shortnes of our life cannot damp
 vs, let the small number of those that shall be
 saved asray vs: If that cannot asray vs, let death
 terrifie vs: If death cannot terrifie vs, let the
 day of iudgement shake vs: If that cannot
 shake vs, let hell torments shnder vs: And
 be in pereg, woe, woe, brethren, if none
 of all these can asraye, if you will not for all
 this repent, but be still obstinate, then you
 shall all perishe, and be damned according

to Christs words. Now let vs proceed to speak
of those things which hinder from repentance:
which indeed, although they be in number infi-
nite, yet at this time I will lay forth seven spe-
ciall lets and hinderances vnto repentance.

The first is Vnbeliefe: that is, when men will
not beleue such things which are spoken and
proued vnto them out of the word of God: that
is it that vomiteth vp all good things, and poi-
soneth the very entrayles of a man, and kee-
peth all good graces from vs, as appeareth,
Math. 13. 38. He did not many great workes
there for their vnbeliefa sake. and in the fourth
Chapter to the Hebrews it is said: Vnto them
was the Gospell preached, as also vnto vs: but
the word that they heard profited them not,
because it was not mixt with Faith in those
that heard it. So that here we may see, al-
though we heare neuer so much, yet if we
bring not faith with vs, we shall neuer profit
vnto repentance: For vnbeliefe taketh vp our
hearts for Babylon, and rejecteth all the whole
some doctrine of saluation, and doth so harden
men in the snares of Sinne, that in the end they
become past feeling, and cannot be touched one
whit, either with the indignation or mercy of
God, but count the one as blessing of blinde, and
make the other a curse for their wickedness.
You shall note some men, who when they
haue

hane heard their sins straightly ripped by by the word of God, and their iust damnation proued by the same, without speedy and earnest repentance, will bzeake out into these words of vnbeliefe: If this be as he saith, God helpe vs, I hope it is not so: I trust I shall do well enough for all this, as long as I hane a good faith in God, and do no body no harme: Shall I leaue my pleasures and my profits for their saying: What I do they thinke none shall be saved but such as reade the Scriptures, and heare Sermons: God forbid but those which do not goe to heare Sermons should be saved as well as they: why, may not one serue God as well at home in his house, hauing good books and good Prayers, as by comming to the Church to heare sermons and seruice: Alas! these men stand too much in their owne light, and bewray what folly and ignorance is in them. For doe they thinke to be saved by any other meanes then God hath appoynted: or when God hath anouched any thing in his word, will they except against it, and so make God a lyar: When God hath once set downe a thing, & proued it to their faces, will they yet reply: When God hath told vs, that the preaching of the word is the ordinary means of our saluation, shall we hope to be saved though we contemne it, and neuer (or very seldome) heare

it: Is not this plaine infidelitie and unbellesse, that when God sayth one thing, we will say another: when God saith yea, we will say no, I hope not so: Yea surely, that is it that stoppeth the way to Gods graces, and barreth vs out from repentance.

The second let is, the presumption of Gods mercy: for if men be sharply reprov'd for their sin, and exhorted to repentance, by and by they talke contrary, saying; God is mercifull, God is mercifull: as though God were made all of mercy, and that there were no iustice in him at all. And thus the wicked make Gods mercy an occasion to sinne. Which thing the Prophet Nahum in the first of his Prophecie doth sharply reprove. The Lord (saith he) is slowe to anger, but he is great in power, and will not surely cleare the wicked. But because I haue spoken before of this presuming and misapplying of Gods mercy, I will here passe it over, willing you to note it as one speciall let vnto repentance.

The third hinderance is, the example of the multitude: for that both harden and embolden men vnto sinne: As when many birds flicker and focke together, they fall vpon the baite without any feare, but one or two alone will be afraid: even so the examples of many sinne-companions do embolden men to run through
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the snares of Satan without any mistrust. Therefore it is said in Exo. 23. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to doe euill. This is the thing which hindereth a great number from God: for they neuer looke vp vnto God, or to his word, but stare vpon the common doings of most men, and examples of the world: thinking, if they doe as the most men doe, and as their fore-fathers haue done before them, they are cocke-sure and on an euen ground. And thereupon artisseth their diuellish pronerbs; Doe as the most men doe, and the fewest will speake ill of you. But they haue forgotten S. Pauls rule, Rom. 12. Fashion not your selues like vnto this world. These fellows that stand vpon multitudes, will reason thus: We see none of the great ones of the world, none of the Noble, none of the rich, none of the wise and prudent receiue this doctrine, but onely a few shake-raggies, and beggarly rascalls; and therfore it is a token that it is nothing worth, and that it is doubtfull, & not for vs to meddle withall. Doe what thoughts may creepe into our heads, and how asly Satan may trumpe in our way, and blind-fold vs, & leade as away in the darke, by dotting vs with the example of the multitude. Therefore let vs take heed of those pit-falls which Satan layeth in our way, and not be carried away with those thoughts

and reasons. The wicked beare themselves in hand, that they shall winne the game, and that the gale goeth on their side, & there is nothing but crowding long before it be day, & great triumphing among them before any stroke be giuen, and that because we are but a handfull of people, and they a great multitude, and that in a manner the whole world agreeth with them to practise our death. Thus the diuell both cast a mist before their eyes, and closely leades them away from repentance. Therefore deare brethren, let vs stand fast in the word of the Lord, and not be caried away, or holued quite downe with the raging streame of the multitude, but let vs know it to be one speciall engine of Saathan, whereby he driueth vs from repentance.

The fourth let vnto repentance is, long custome of sin: for that taketh away all sense and feeling of sinne, and maketh it as it were another Nature vnto vs, so that we may aswell alter nature, as shake it off, when it is once thus souled vnto vs, through long custome. Wherefore it is said, Ier. 13. 23. Can the blacke Moore change his skinn, or the Leopard his spots? Then may you also do good that are accustomed to do euill. Where the Prophet affirmeth that it is as hard to cure an olde disease that is bred in the bones, and to remedy a sinne that hath bene hatched and brought vp with vs, as
to

to wash a blacke more white, or to change the spots of a Leopard, which cannot be without destroying of nature. And surely, try it who will, he shall finde as hard a matter to leave an old custome, whether it be of swearing, of gaming, of lying, of whoring, of evill company, or any other sinne, as to wash an Ethiopian. Therefore it is written, Prover. 27. Though thou shouldst bray a foole in a mortar, among Wheate brayed with a Pestle, yet will not his foolishnesse depart from him. So that as long as we are in custome with sinne, the doore of repentance is barred against vs.

The first hinderance is, long escaping of punishment, for the wicked thereby are hardened in sinne, and driven off from repentance: even as an olde thiefe that hath stolen a long time, and escaped both prison and gallowes, is animated more boldly to proceed in his wickednes thinking he shall so alwaies escape. So many filthy and loose liuers goe forward in their abomination without repentance, thinking that because God doeth not incontinently punish them, and shew some manifold iudgement and signe of his wrath vpon them, therefore they shall be acquitted for altogether. Whereas contrariwise, if God should by and by strike them downe as soone as they had sinned, by thundering vpon one, and lightning vpon another,
and

and raining fire and brimstone vpon the third, it would make them afraid. Whereupon it is said in 2 Pet. 3. 2. 4. This first vnderstand, that there shall come in the last dayes, mockers, which will walke after their lusts, and say: Where is the promise of his comming? For since the Fathers dyed, all things continue alike from the beginning of the Creation. But let these men well knowe, that when God hath delayed a long time, and prolonged the terme of the wicked, at length he will shew, that although he waited for their repentance, yet he forgot not their misdeeds, but registered them before him, and packed them vp vpon a great heape, to increase the terrour of his wrath.

The first hyderance is, the beholding of other mens ends. For when some men that haue liued a wicked and an vngacious life, and haue bene notorious sinners, euen to the worldward, so that every man could point at them: yet if vpon their death-bed they can say a few good words, and cry God mercy, and say their prayers, and forgive all the world, and so die quietly, it is maruellous to heare how foolish people of the world will exalt them, and iustifie them, saying: He made a very good end as any man could make, he dyed as quiet as a Lambe, and set all things in good order before he dyed. Whereupon another wicked and monstrous

barlet

barlet is incouraged to sinne : For thinketh he, such a man mueth as wisely as I, or any man else, and yet he made a very good end, and why may not I do so too? But alas these mens eyes are bleared ; for to dye quietly is not to dye godly : to cry God mercy for fashion, is not to haue God mercifull : to say a few prayers from the teeth outward, is not to dye in the faith of Christ : for many doe all these, and yet die miserably.

The last let is, hope of long life : for while men feede and belot themselves in this hope, they are drunken in sinne, and deferre the day of repentance, as the rich man in the 12. of Lu. dreaming of his long life, cast off all thought of God, and the other life, and of Christs coming, and of all good things, and sayd within himselfe : Soule, thou halt much goods layd vp for many yeares, liue at ease, eate, drinke, and take thy pastime. Thus the bleare-eyed men of this world, choake vp repentance, and quite smother it, by doating themselves with hope of long life. Therfore my deere brethren, I beseech you by the mercies of God, in the bowels of Christ Iesus, that none of all these common lets may stay you from speedy and vnfained repentance, but that you may ouer-ride them all : lest haply you being sound without Repentance, and taken tardy in your sinnes, should

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Should all perishe and be damned, according to
Christs sentence. Wherefore in conclusion let vs
with godly Ezechiah, be afraid of Gods threat-
nings, sorrow afoze hand, stand in awe of God,
examine our consciences, mourne for our sins,
& lament inwardly, that when the wicked, who
haue swarmed in pleasure here below, shal en-
ter into their eternall paines, we may then, I
say, there haue everlastling peace & rest: that
when Iesus Christ shal appeare from heauen
with all his Angels, we may haue crownes of
glozy, and reigne with our God and our Sa-
uioz his Sonne, and all his Saints & Angels,
in the midst of all ioy, in the heauens for ever-
more. To the which ioy habzing vs all, which
hath so dearely bought vs, Iesus Christ the righ-
teous. To whom, with the Father, and the holy
Ghost, be all Honour, Glory, Praise, Power, and
Dominion, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

